



Kosovo

Background

June 30, 1999

The Military Campaign Against Yugoslavia

The Air War

- On March 24, 1999, NATO-authorized “Phase I” military action against Yugoslavia (OPERATION ALLIED FORCE) began with an initial salvo of air- and sea-launched cruise missile strikes. More than 450 NATO aircraft were initially available to participate in the air strikes, including approximately 250 U.S. aircraft taking part in the U.S. segment of the operation (OPERATION NOBLE ANVIL). Targets in both Kosovo and elsewhere in Serbia, including in and around Belgrade, were struck. The United States deployed additional air assets to the region, including B-1B bombers, F-117 “Stealth” fighters, EA-6B Prowlers and tankers. Additional NATO aircraft also were committed to the operation, raising the available total to more than 1,000 – over 700 of which were American. U.S. warships, including the aircraft carrier THEODORE ROOSEVELT battle group, were also deployed, and Britain moved the aircraft carrier INVINCIBLE into the Adriatic to join the French carrier FOCH.
- Initial air strikes involved the forces of 13 NATO nations and targeted Yugoslavia’s integrated air defense system and command and control facilities. Additional nights of air strikes continued to target military sites throughout Yugoslavia, including Montenegro – a province of Yugoslavia generally sympathetic to the West that has pronounced its neutrality in the conflict. More than 100 cruise missiles were launched, over 2,700 air sorties were flown, and several hundred military, security force, and related targets were struck in the first nine days. The air attacks, which had been carried out primarily at night by manned aircraft, including U.S. B-2 “Stealth” bombers, were stepped up to include operations around the clock. Ninety percent of strikes early on were carried out with precision-guided munitions. By the end of the second month of bombing, that number had declined to just over 70 percent, and had dropped to 35 percent by the end of the air campaign. According to SACEUR General Wesley Clark, this was “the highest proportion of precision weaponry that has ever been used in any air operation anywhere.” In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, roughly 9 percent of strikes were conducted with precision munitions.
- The extended military air operation has fueled concerns over the readiness of U.S. forces. The United States expended roughly one-third of its conventional air-launched cruise missile (CALCM) inventory and began to run low on the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM). As the air campaign intensified, a greater number of unguided weapons was used. The head of the Air Combat Command, General Richard Hawley, stated

that the air campaign affected the U.S. ability to execute the national military strategy of fighting two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts. On April 29, 1999, he stated that “we cannot continue to accumulate contingencies.... We are going to be in desperate need, in my command, of a significant retrenchment of commitments for a significant period of time.” On May 11, 1999, Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated that “we are wearing out systems, we’re wearing out people.... we’ve got to find a way to either increase the size of our forces or decrease the number of our missions.” On May 26, 1999, DOD announced it would implement its “stop-loss” authority on June 15th to prevent the departure or retirement of Air Force personnel needed to continue the air campaign. On June 24, 1999, Secretary Cohen indicated that the air attacks on Yugoslavia represented “the equivalent of a major theater war campaign.”

- The number of strike sorties during the first week of the air campaign averaged around 50 a day, roughly 15 percent of the total number of sorties. This compares to about 1,000 a day during the Gulf War. U.S. aircraft carried out 60 to 70 percent of the strikes, with NATO allies flying at least one half of the total sorties. Weather was a limiting factor in the air campaign. At least 20 percent of NATO air strikes were initially called off as a result of bad weather. As the weather improved, the intensity of air strikes increased. At the start of the third week of the bombing campaign, the number of total sorties – including strike and support missions – exceeded 400 daily. By the end of the fourth week, NATO had launched more than 9,300 total sorties, of which 2,750 – roughly 30 percent – were strike sorties. General Clark described the operation as “the most heavily leveraged air campaign ever seen.” By week five, NATO had conducted over 470 air strikes against more than 220 individual targets. By the seventh week, the number of total sorties averaged around 600 daily. This number increased to almost 800 a day during the third month of the air campaign. The original list of NATO targets numbered around 500, and by week seven nearly one-half of them had been attacked. Reports indicated that NATO had drawn up a list of several hundred more targets.
- Six Yugoslav MiGs were shot down by U.S. and allied fighter aircraft. More than 100 aircraft were destroyed out of a total of 450, including more than 80 percent of Yugoslavia’s MiG-29 force. Two Yugoslav MiG-29s were also shot down over Bosnia and one was downed by an F-16 near the Bosnian border. Dozens of surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) were fired by Yugoslavia against NATO aircraft and more than 50 SAM sites were attacked. One U.S. F-117 “Stealth” fighter went down near Belgrade and its pilot was rescued by U.S. forces. The Russian news agency Interfax reported that pieces of the downed U.S. F-117 “Stealth” fighter were flown to Russia aboard a military plane. Another F-117 was struck by shrapnel from a surface-to-air missile but returned to base safely. Several U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles were also downed. An A-10 struck by ground fire made an emergency landing in Macedonia. One U.S. F-16, possibly hit by ground fire or surface-to-air missile fragments, suffered engine failure and crashed west of Belgrade. The pilot was rescued. A Marine Corps Harrier jet also crashed during an exercise in the Adriatic.
- On March 27, 1999, NATO approved “Phase II” of the air strikes, which allowed a broader campaign against command posts, depots, airfields, communications facilities, and troop concentrations south of the 44th parallel. On March 30, 1999, NATO approved an expanded target set to include key government ministry buildings in Belgrade, two of which were destroyed on April 3, 1999 by cruise missiles launched from U.S. ships. NATO also attacked the headquarters of Milosevic’s socialist party in Belgrade, a building that housed television and radio transmitters, and the main Serbian television studio complex. At least two residences used by Milosevic were also attacked.
- “Phase III,” involving attacks on a broad range of targets north of the 44th parallel – including water and electricity stations and telephone services in Belgrade and other strategic locations – was never formally approved. However, in a further expansion of the target set, Yugoslavia’s power grid was repeatedly attacked, temporarily blacking out large areas of Serbia. NATO aircraft, including A-10s, also stepped up their attacks

at low altitude, increasing the risk to pilots. They also struck tactical “targets of opportunity” in addition to pre-selected targets.

- The United States deployed to Albania 24 Apache attack helicopters, 18 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) launchers with the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), 14 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles and other systems, along with 4,800 support soldiers. Deployment of an additional 24 Apache helicopters was under review but never approved. DOD spokesman Ken Bacon stated that the deployment – called Task Force HAWK – represented “an expansion of the air operation,” not a movement toward the introduction of ground troops. Apache helicopters began arriving in Albania several weeks after their deployment was approved. On April 26, 1999, an Apache crashed on a training mission northeast of Tirana, the Albanian capital. A second Apache, also on a training mission, crashed on May 5, 1999, killing two U.S. crewmen. General Klaus Naumann, head of NATO’s Military Committee, stated that the Apaches “have no combat mission which would allow them to cross the Albanian border.” However, a DOD spokesman disputed this. Reports indicated that DOD refused to grant General Clark authority to conduct live-fire tests or employ the Apaches in Kosovo because of high risk. General Henry Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that the Apaches would be used when the risk is reduced “to the very minimum.” They were never used in combat, and their deployment to Albania was estimated to have cost nearly \$300 million. U.S. Air Force Special Operations pilots also flew three low-altitude AC-130 aircraft over Kosovo. U.S. paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division arrived in Albania to provide force protection. On April 23, 1999, the United States announced it would deploy more than 2,000 additional U.S. troops with 15 M1-A1 tanks, 14 more Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles, and 8 howitzers for force protection purposes.
- As the air operation continued, direct attacks on tank columns and other targets in Kosovo intensified, and major roads, bridges, and rail lines linking Serbia with Kosovo were severed. General Clark requested additional firepower and NATO air assets. Secretary of Defense Cohen stated, “Whatever General Clark feels he needs in order to carry out this campaign successfully, he will receive.” By the end of the fourth week of air strikes, NATO estimated that it had destroyed 10 to 20 percent of the approximately 800 Serbian tanks and armored personnel carriers in Kosovo. By the end of the eighth week, it estimated that more than 30 percent of Serbian tanks, artillery, and other heavy weaponry in Kosovo had been destroyed. General Clark also requested additional ATACMS for positioning along Yugoslavia’s borders, including within Croatia.
- The dispersal and concealment tactics used by Serbian forces in Kosovo, and their use of civilians as “human shields,” complicated targeting. On April 15, 1999, NATO admitted striking by mistake a civilian vehicle traveling in a convoy of Kosovar refugees. NATO planes also attacked military vehicles in two other convoys. On May 13, 1999, several bombs struck a refugee convoy that was positioned in proximity to a military target. Some refugee reports indicated Yugoslav planes and helicopters attacked civilian refugees in Kosovo.
- A number of NATO aircraft returned to base without dropping their ordnance because of bad weather, the proximity of the targets to civilian infrastructure, and the requirement to avoid “collateral damage.” DOD spokesman and Air Force General Charles Wald stated that “these rules of engagement are as strict as any I’ve seen during 27 years in the military.” General Clark was required to seek approval from NATO Secretary General Javier Solana for attacks on sensitive targets, including sites in Belgrade and targets that posed a substantial risk of collateral damage. A number of targets, including those of “cultural” significance, were reportedly placed off-limits to NATO attack. The commander of the NATO air campaign, Lieutenant General Michael Short, also expressed frustration at the targeting restrictions placed upon the air operation. Up to 80 percent of the air strikes that occurred were against targets previously struck. After Yugoslavia’s acceptance of a peace agreement on June 3, 1999, the rules of engagement for NATO pilots were tightened.

- Fewer than two dozen bombs and missiles launched by NATO aircraft either missed their targets or caused unintended civilian casualties. One attack against a bridge struck a passenger train crossing it. Civilians casualties also resulted from an attack on several convoys in Kosovo and an errant missile that struck a residential neighborhood in Serbia. On April 29, 1999, a missile launched at a Yugoslav surface-to-air missile site veered off-course and landed outside Sofia, Bulgaria. Several other missiles also landed in Bulgaria, without casualties. A NATO missile hit a passenger bus crossing a bridge in Kosovo on May 1, 1999. Subsequent press reports indicated the bus was carrying Serbian paramilitary forces. NATO bombs also struck a residential area in Nis and several hospital complexes in Nis, Belgrade, and Surdulica. At least three laser-guided bombs dropped from a U.S. B-2 were incorrectly targeted and struck the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on May 7, 1999. In a joint statement, Secretary Cohen and Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet said the bombing was based on “faulty information” and was “an anomaly that is unlikely to happen again.” Collateral damage from other bombs damaged the residences of ambassadors from Sweden, Spain, Iran, India, Switzerland, and Norway, as well as the Libyan and Israeli embassies. Three bombs were also dropped on a former Yugoslav army barracks in Kosovo that had been taken over by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA – also referred to by the acronym “UCK”), which has been fighting to obtain independence from Serbia. A prison housing ethnic Albanian inmates was also struck, as was a crowded bridge in central Serbia. A convoy of Western journalists was also struck in southern Kosovo and several bombs accidentally landed in Albania. Despite these incidents, General Clark called the military campaign “the most precise, effective, and collateral damage-free air operation ever conducted.” Secretary Cohen called it “the most precise application of air power in history.”
- On April 10, 1999, the United States approved the deployment of more than 80 additional aircraft, including F-16s, A-10s, tankers, and cargo planes. Two days later, General Clark requested 300 more U.S. combat and support aircraft, including F-15s and A-10s. Thirty tankers were approved on April 26, 1999 as the first installment of this enhanced deployment. Ten more B-52s were ordered to deploy on April 29, 1999. An additional 176 U.S. aircraft were approved on May 6, 1999. These additional deployments brought the total number of aircraft participating in the air campaign to more than 1,000 – more than 700 of which were American. Basing of these aircraft was also an issue. DOD began a phased call up of as many as 33,000 reserve and National Guard forces, primarily to provide air crews and maintenance support.
- NATO began carrying out air strikes against Yugoslavia from bases in Hungary and Turkey. However, plans to base 36 F-15s in Turkey for use in the air strikes were suspended. These new air corridors were expected to ease air traffic congestion, relieve overcrowding at existing air bases, and complicate Serbian air defense operations. Bulgaria and Romania also granted NATO overflight rights. The Czech Republic and Slovakia approved NATO’s use of airfields, roads, and railways.
- The length of the air campaign – 78 days – raised questions about its overall effectiveness. On May 4, 1999, General Naumann stated that “we did not succeed in our initial attempts to coerce Milosevic through air strikes to accept our demands. Nor did we succeed in preventing Yugoslavia [from] pursuing a campaign of ethnic separation and expulsion.” He stated that the air campaign was “properly working,” but noted that political constraints had deprived the alliance of the element of surprise, declaring, “We have conditions we have to follow which degrade our own military campaign, especially the need to limit civilian casualties.... The net result is that the campaign is undoubtedly prolonged.” On May 6, 1999, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea stated, “We have not been able to succeed in what was our initial objective in stopping the ethnic cleansing. Milosevic has gone on with his campaign of ethnic sectarianism and expulsions.” NATO officials speculated that Milosevic had achieved his goals of de-populating Kosovo of ethnic Albanians and ensuring Serbian control of the province. On June 25, 1999, President Clinton admitted that he had miscalculated the length of time it would take for Milosevic to accede to NATO demands, stating that he thought the bombing would last only “a couple of days.”

- Concerns emerged over whether the air campaign would accomplish the goal of ensuring the return of refugees before the onset of cold weather. On May 21, 1999, DOD spokesman Ken Bacon declared, “No one can guarantee at this stage that the air campaign will produce all of the objectives by the fall.” The commander of the NATO air campaign, Lieutenant General Michael Short, stated on May 22, 1999 that “if we do this for two more months, we will either kill this army in Kosovo or send it on the run.”
- A communiqué issued at the 50th anniversary NATO summit in Washington on April 23, 1999 declared that NATO was “prepared to suspend its air strikes” once Milosevic begins to withdraw Yugoslav forces from Kosovo; ensures that all violence and repression have ceased; agrees to an international military presence in Kosovo with NATO at its “core”; allows all refugees to return; and agrees to work toward a political settlement that would allow for “an international provisional administration of Kosovo under which its people can enjoy substantial autonomy.” The communiqué also declared that NATO would seek authorization from the UN Security Council for any peacekeeping force.
- A report by a non-governmental research group estimated the cost of U.S. participation in the military campaign during the first 15 days at between \$400 million and \$500 million and the total cost of the air campaign at up to \$4 billion. Other estimates placed the cost of the air campaign at between \$70 million and \$100 million a day. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) placed the cost of the air campaign during the first three weeks at \$600 million and estimated it would rise to \$1 billion through May. The CBO also estimated that a ground campaign could cost the United States more than \$1 billion a month or over \$15 billion a year. DOD submitted a \$5.5 billion fiscal year 1999 emergency supplemental budget request to Congress to cover the costs of the air campaign and the humanitarian relief effort.
- On April 6, 1999, Yugoslavia announced a unilateral cease-fire in its military operations against the KLA “as a gesture of goodwill.” Milosevic also announced a willingness to negotiate a political solution with Kosovar Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova and to allow refugees to return to Kosovo. NATO called the cease-fire announcement a “sham” and Secretary of Defense Cohen called it “absurd.” State Department spokesman James Rubin declared that “NATO countries are simply not going to accept some phony peace deal.” White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart declared that such “half-measures” and “hollow cease-fires... will not be acceptable to stop the bombing.” On April 9, 1999, the Belgrade government declared that “peace has been restored in Kosovo.” One month later, on May 10, 1999, the Yugoslav army announced a partial withdrawal of troops and special police from Kosovo. Secretary of State Albright called this a “half-measure.” Approximately 120 troops were filmed leaving Kosovo by bus, an event that DOD spokesman Ken Bacon called “staged.” U.S. and NATO officials suggested any pullout might be part of a normal troop rotation.
- Three weeks into the military campaign, 50 percent of the fuel stocks for the Yugoslav army had been destroyed, two of three major army headquarters had been attacked, lines of communication – including bridges – had been severed, the command, control and intelligence system had been disrupted, and 150 major targets had been destroyed. However, the Yugoslav air defense system remained relatively robust, with only five air defense sites classified as “destroyed” in the first three weeks. By week five, NATO had destroyed only 9 strategic surface-to-air missile radar sites and had damaged only 9 of Serbia’s 17 military airfields. Nevertheless, General Clark declared the air defense system to be “essentially... ineffective.”
- As the air operation continued, the Yugoslav army began to face a shortage of personnel, with desertions said to number in the hundreds each week. However, analysts still considered it a significant threat. There were conflicting opinions among officials over whether the conflict had rallied the army to Milosevic’s side and raised morale. On April 23, 1999, General Clark stated “We’re winning. He (Milosevic) is losing. And

he knows it.” Nevertheless, an intelligence assessment reportedly concluded that Milosevic’s ability to wage war “remains intact,” and a DOD official called the Serbs “very adept at repairing certain facilities and creating workarounds for facilities that we’ve hit.” By the start of the third month of the air campaign, more than one half of Yugoslavia’s military capability remained intact, according to NATO officials. On May 12, 1999, Milosevic acknowledged for the first time that Yugoslav forces had suffered “many” casualties. Anti-war demonstrations were also reported in Serbian cities.

- Throughout the military campaign, Yugoslavia was reported to have continuing access to fuel supplies as a result of shipments smuggled in from Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania, and from shipments originating from Russia, Ukraine, and Greece – a NATO member – transiting through Montenegrin ports. NATO and the European Union agreed to ban all oil sales to Yugoslavia, and NATO agreed to an oil embargo and a “visit and search” regime for ships in the Adriatic. However, General Naumann indicated this was intended as a deterrent and “does not give us the right to... stop a merchant vessel by the use of force.” A draft enforcement plan by General Clark to allow the use of force was rejected by NATO political leaders. Russia declared it would not be bound by the embargo, which it said could lead to “a third world war, the final war.” On May 25, 1999, NATO agreed to a search regime that would be limited to ships of countries that have agreed to stop oil shipments to Yugoslavia and to allow such inspections.
- U.S. intelligence and defense officials warned that Yugoslavia had radiological and chemical weapons that could be used against NATO or ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. A chemical plant in Lucani was struck by NATO. The Yugoslav army was also reported to have used tear gas against civilians and possibly BZ gas against the KLA in Kosovo.
- British press reports indicated NATO concern that a spy was tipping off Yugoslavia to the time and location of NATO bombing attacks. Some buildings on the target list were reportedly emptied prior to being struck by NATO forces. U.S. intelligence reports and NATO officials indicated that Yugoslav civilians were monitoring unencrypted NATO air-to-ground voice communications to provide early warning of attacks.
- Press reports indicated that President Clinton had ordered the CIA to undertake covert action against the Milosevic regime, including the training of ethnic Albanian rebels in sabotage tactics and conducting cyber attacks on the banking system to disrupt Milosevic’s international financial holdings.
- As the air campaign continued, concerns increased over the unity of the NATO alliance. Greece called for a pause to the bombing campaign and refused to allow Turkish aircraft participating in the operation to overfly its air space. Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic also pressed for a temporary halt to the air strikes. The Italian Foreign Minister stated that the air strikes “certainly have not produced the results that have been expected.”
- With the acceptance by Yugoslavia on June 3, 1999 of a NATO-backed peace proposal, the air campaign was expected to end within days. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook stated that Yugoslavia’s acceptance “is not enough in itself” to end the bombing. U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin declared, “Verifiable deeds, not seductive words, are the only currency that counts in this current conflict.” On June 9, 1999, NATO and Yugoslav military officials finalized and signed a military technical agreement specifying the modalities and procedures for the Serbian troop withdrawal from Kosovo. NATO indicated its readiness to suspend the air strikes upon confirmation of the start of the Yugoslav troop withdrawal. The Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav army, General Svetozar Marjanovic, a signatory to the military technical agreement, declared that “the war has ended.” Some cease-fire violations by Serbian forces were reported near the Albanian border. However, reports indicated that Serbian forces were withdrawing from Kosovo.

- On June 10, 1999, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana announced that NATO had formally suspended its air strikes against Yugoslavia. On June 20, 1999, after completion of the Serbian troop withdrawal from Kosovo, NATO formally terminated the air campaign.
- After 78 days of bombing, NATO had flown more than 34,000 sorties – of which almost 10,000 were strike missions – against more than 500 fixed and 500 tactical targets. More than 23,000 weapons were launched against Yugoslav targets. The United States carried out roughly 52 percent of the strike sorties and 70 percent of the support sorties. NATO estimated that more than 100 aircraft out of 240 had been destroyed (42 percent), including nearly 80 percent of the most modern fighter aircraft and surface-to-air missile systems, along with 450 out of 1,400 artillery pieces (32 percent), 220 out of 825 armored personnel carriers (27 percent), 120 out of 1,270 tanks (9 percent), and more than 260 other military vehicles. NATO estimates also indicated that fourteen command posts, 29 highway bridges, and 11 railroad bridges were destroyed, as well as more than one half of the Yugoslav army infrastructure in Kosovo. NATO further estimated that 5,000 Yugoslav forces had been killed and more than 10,000 wounded. Milosevic said only 576 Serbian military and police officers had been killed since the start of the military operation.
- Damage to Serbian forces in Kosovo dramatically increased during the final two weeks of the bombing campaign. This was attributed to four factors: better weather; increased air assets over Kosovo; the degradation of Serbian air defenses; and the ground offensive conducted by the KLA, which forced Serbian troops out into the open, increasing their vulnerability to NATO air strikes.
- As post-bombing assessments continue, reports indicate that the extent of damage inflicted on the Yugoslav military was not as extensive as previously believed. Many of the targets struck by allied pilots were judged to be decoys. The approximately 47,000 Yugoslav troops, paramilitary, and police forces that withdrew from Kosovo took with them 220 tanks, 300 armored personnel carriers, 308 artillery batteries, and hundreds of other military vehicles and pieces of military equipment. Damaged tanks and other heavy weapons were also removed by withdrawing Yugoslav forces. An official U.S. review of the air campaign is to be conducted, led by Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Ralston.
- Discrepancies between U.S. and NATO forces in precision-guided munitions and other weapons systems have increased concerns that the gap between the military capabilities of U.S. and other NATO countries is growing and may complicate future allied military strategy and actions. General Naumann stated that the Kosovo conflict suggested that the United States and its European allies “will not even be able to fight on the same battlefield” in the future. Lieutenant General Short stated that the United States may find itself fighting with “second- and third-team members” of the alliance.

The Ground Troops Option

- The introduction of ground troops to deal with the growing Serb attacks against Kosovar Albanians is an option that received little official support among U.S. or NATO authorities. President Clinton said he had “no intention” of placing U.S. troops into the conflict. Vice President Gore stated that “we are not going to put any ground troops into a combat situation.... There is no consideration by NATO or any of the allies for the introduction of ground troops.” However, as the air campaign continued, increased support emerged for developing a plan for the possible use of ground troops. On May 18, 1999, President Clinton declared for the first time that “we have not and will not take any option off the table.”
- A NATO staff study last year concluded that 75,000 to 200,000 ground troops would be needed for a ground assault on Kosovo or all of Yugoslavia. U.S. officials stated that a NATO plan for ground troops was “on the

shelf” and could be updated if necessary. NATO Secretary General Solana confirmed that he authorized a review and update of the study, but denied press reports that NATO was drafting plans for a late-May invasion of Kosovo using up to 100,000 troops. President Clinton called the decision to update the study “a wise and prudent course.”

- British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook stated that Britain could “conceive of circumstances in which it may be feasible to commit ground troops.” The U.K. reportedly pledged to commit up to 50,000 troops to support a ground invasion force. France also called for consideration of “additional means” beyond the air campaign. Speculation increased that ground troops could be deployed in a “non-hostile” or “semi-permissive environment” in which Serbian forces were degraded to the point that they no longer posed any “organized armed resistance.” German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called the prospect of a ground invasion of Kosovo “unthinkable.”
- General Clark denied press reports that he had developed a concept of operations for introducing 60,000 troops – including 20,000 U.S. troops – into a “semi-permissive environment” in Kosovo by late July 1999. A plan calling for 90,000 troops was reportedly dismissed by General Clark as politically unacceptable. However, at the request of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Clark also developed options for a “forced entry” into Kosovo, and advocated deploying a force of up to 50,000 troops on Kosovo’s borders to increase pressure on Milosevic. Subsequent press reports indicated that the United States was considering introducing a ground force of 90,000 combat troops if a peace agreement was not reached quickly. Macedonia prohibited NATO from using its territory as a staging base for a ground invasion of Kosovo.
- Yugoslav Foreign Minister Zivadin Jovanovic warned that a ground invasion of Kosovo would spread “beyond the borders of Yugoslavia” and could engulf “the whole continent.” The commander of the 3rd Yugoslav Army in Kosovo declared that NATO ground troops would face “hell on earth” if they tried to enter Kosovo. NATO officials reported that Yugoslav troops had shifted their military strategy, fortifying the borders with Albania and Macedonia and digging in in anticipation of a ground invasion by NATO.
- In a letter to Secretary Cohen, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reportedly argued that ground troops were necessary to guarantee fulfillment of U.S. political objectives.

The Situation on the Ground

- As the air campaign accelerated, Serbian forces fortified their positions in Kosovo, bringing in heavy weapons, tanks, and anti-aircraft batteries. Tanks and troops were concealed among civilian buildings. U.S. and NATO officials reportedly estimated that there were up to 8,000 more Serbian forces in and around Kosovo than when the air campaign began on March 24, 1999. General Clark stated that Milosevic is “bringing in reinforcements continually. If you actually added up what’s there on any given day, you might actually find out that he’s strengthened his forces in there.” Serbian forces “are regrouping, refitting, reconstituting, and preparing for future operations. But we have not seen them leaving.” In an interview on April 29, 1999, Milosevic said the number of Serbian forces in Kosovo had increased to 100,000, in response to the threatened introduction of NATO ground troops.
- After the signing of a withdrawal agreement on June 9, 1999, Serbian forces began to depart Kosovo. However, reports indicated Serbian forces were torching houses as they departed, in violation of the agreement. Sporadic fighting between Serbian forces and the KLA was reported, and Serb civilians also began to leave Kosovo with departing troops in order to avoid reprisals from returning ethnic Albanians. Some 60,000 Serbs are estimated to have fled Kosovo – roughly one-third of the pre-war Serb population. Although the

air strikes have ended, NATO continued to fly between 350 and 400 sorties daily for reconnaissance and air patrol missions.

- U.S. intelligence and senior military officials reportedly concluded that Serbian military and police forces did severe damage to the KLA. All seven KLA regional command centers in Kosovo were destroyed by the Yugoslav army. However, pockets of resistance remained and KLA recruitment increased, leading a NATO spokesman to refer to the KLA as “a Phoenix rising from the ashes.” Estimates of the KLA’s strength ran as high as 17,000. Cross-border fighting also occurred between KLA forces in Albania and Serbian forces. Serbian forces crossed the Albanian border in pursuit of KLA fighters and burned houses in one town before retreating back to Serbia. During the third month of the air campaign, NATO aircraft for the first known time provided air support for an unsuccessful KLA ground offensive code-named OPERATION ARROW. Although the operation failed to achieve its military objective, it succeeded in drawing Yugoslav forces out into the open, making them vulnerable to NATO air strikes.
- Mass killings by Serbian forces of Kosovars escalated with the onset of NATO bombing, prompting U.S. and NATO officials to refer to the Serb actions as systematic “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide.” NATO officials stated that the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo had reached “new heights.” General Wald stated, “I don’t think NATO’s air [campaign] has stopped that at all.” Mass graves have been photographed by NATO and were discovered by NATO peacekeeping forces after entering Kosovo. DOD spokesman Ken Bacon declared that “it is difficult to say that we have prevented one act of brutality at this stage.” According to NATO officials, Yugoslav forces dug up graves in an effort to destroy evidence of atrocities. In an interview on April 29, 1999, Milosevic stated that “individual houses” had been torched, “but not whole villages.” He stated, “Our regular forces are highly disciplined. The paramilitary irregular forces are a different story.” NATO estimated that at least 10,000 ethnic Albanians were killed in more than 100 massacres carried out by Serbian forces in the two months prior to the signing of the peace accord. On June 17, 1999, Yugoslavia’s UN Ambassador admitted that some Yugoslav forces had committed atrocities in Kosovo, although he stated that NATO estimates of the number of people killed were exaggerated.
- U.S. officials denied that the intensified Serb campaign in Kosovo was a direct result of NATO actions. Secretary of State Albright stated that “it is just simply an upside-down argument to think that NATO or we have made this get worse.... To say that this has now backfired is just dead wrong.”
- The humanitarian crisis in the region is precarious, but stabilized as a result of the cease-fire agreement. In a report released on May 10, 1999, the State Department concluded that more than 90 percent of Kosovo’s ethnic Albanian population – approximately one and a half million people – had been displaced or expelled from the province as a result of the fighting that began to escalate in March 1998. More than 800,000 refugees crossed the border into Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia, and the Yugoslav republic of Montenegro. At times, the number of refugees arriving at border crossings daily reached the tens of thousands. NATO spokesmen said that Serb forces stripped refugees of their identity papers in an effort to keep them from returning, and extorted money from them in what a NATO spokesman called “institutionalized gangsterism.” British officials referred to the crisis as a “mass deportation” on a scale not seen since the days of Stalin and Hitler. In a change of tactics, Yugoslavia closed its borders with Albania and Macedonia for two days and turned back refugees seeking to flee Kosovo, possibly to use them as “human shields” against further NATO attacks. Serbian forces also laid mines, dug trenches, constructed bunkers, and positioned tanks and artillery along Kosovo’s borders. Five refugees were killed when a mine exploded at the border crossing with Albania. Airdrops of food supplies to displaced persons inside Kosovo also began.
- NATO spokesmen cited reports of a growing list of atrocities committed against ethnic Albanians by Yugoslav forces in Kosovo, including executions, gang rapes, and the use of civilians to provide “blood banks” for

Serbian casualties. Several ethnic Albanian leaders – including one signatory of the Rambouillet agreement – were reportedly executed by Serb forces, although doubt was cast on these reports. Prior to the introduction of NATO peacekeepers, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported that the situation in Kosovo was one of “total lawlessness and an almost complete absence of any form of protection for ethnic Albanians.” As NATO troops deployed throughout Kosovo, evidence of atrocities grew. Some 90 suspected mass grave sites were identified by NATO peacekeepers. For the first time, the United States dispatched Federal Bureau of Investigation agents to gather evidence about war crimes committed against non-Americans.

- Fifty seven nations, including all 19 NATO countries and Japan, provided humanitarian assistance to deal with the refugee crisis. The United States pledged an additional \$50 million, half of which would be provided by the Department of Defense for goods and services, including transport, shelter, and logistical support. An airlift of supplies to the refugees also began. Eighteen countries, including Germany, Greece, Norway, Turkey, Spain, Iceland, and Canada, began the process of resettling up to 200,000 refugees in those countries on a temporary basis. Plans to temporarily resettle 20,000 refugees at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba were suspended and the United States began to resettle them temporarily in the continental United States.
- A NATO forward headquarters was established in Albania to help coordinate relief efforts (OPERATION ALLIED HARBOR), a concept of operations was developed on an “urgent basis,” and rules of engagement were approved. The number of NATO troops planned to assist with the refugee relief effort (“Albania force,” or “AFOR”) was reduced from 8,700 to 7,300. U.S. troops helped build camps for 20,000 refugees.
- U.S. and NATO officials reported that Yugoslav forces in Montenegro expelled ethnic Albanian refugees from the province in an expansion of the ethnic cleansing campaign. Yugoslav forces also reportedly shelled refugee camps in Montenegro. Montenegro’s army commander and seven other top army generals were removed from power by Milosevic in what was seen as an attempt to solidify Serbian control over the republic. The Yugoslav army demanded to take control over Montenegro’s police force and sealed the borders with Albania and Croatia for several days. Yugoslavia also sent 1,500 additional troops into the province. British officials accused Milosevic of preparing a “coup” against Montenegrin President Djukanovic. NATO Secretary General Solana warned Milosevic that if he launched such an action “he will be stopped. We have plans to stop him.” Secretary of State Albright testified that any Serbian incursions into Montenegro “will have serious consequences.”
- A French-led international “extraction force” stationed in neighboring Macedonia was augmented by other NATO “enabling” forces, bringing the total number of deployed forces in Macedonia to approximately 12,000. These forces were tasked with providing refugee relief. Britain sent an additional 2,000 troops to Macedonia to augment the “enabling” force, and NATO developed plans to deploy up to 8,000 more troops in Macedonia to supplement relief efforts. Refugee camps in Macedonia were filled beyond capacity and the country restricted the entry of additional refugees.
- On May 2, 1999, Yugoslavia released to the Reverend Jesse Jackson in Belgrade three U.S. soldiers who were seized by Serb forces near the Yugoslav border on March 31, 1999 while participating in the UN preventive deployment force in Macedonia. Yugoslavia had sent conflicting signals regarding its intention to conduct a military trial of the soldiers and the United States had demanded the soldiers’ immediate release. NATO officials stated that Serbian special forces were involved in the capture of the soldiers. Acting Cypriot President Spyros Kyprianou traveled to Belgrade in an unsuccessful effort to secure the release of the soldiers. On April 26, 1999, the Red Cross was allowed to visit the detained soldiers for the first time. The following day a Red Cross doctor was allowed to examine them and pronounced them in

“satisfactory condition.” KLA forces in Kosovo also captured a Yugoslav army soldier, who was turned over to U.S. forces in Albania. The KLA reported that two more Yugoslav soldiers had been captured, along with a Russian volunteer wearing a Yugoslav military uniform. A second captured Yugoslav soldier was turned over to NATO forces and was also held in Germany. Both Yugoslav soldiers held by U.S. forces were released to the Red Cross on May 18, 1999. A Russian mercenary was also killed in a battle between the KLA and Serbian forces.

- SFOR troops in Bosnia were fired on as they destroyed a rail transport line running from Serbia through Bosnia to Montenegro. Serb attacks on SFOR increased after the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia began. On May 26, 1999, Yugoslav forces crossed into Bosnia and temporarily seized six SFOR soldiers, taking them across the border into Yugoslavia before releasing them.
- British press reports indicated that a contingent of 80 British special forces were operating within Kosovo and providing targeting information to NATO forces. Special forces from other countries, including France, Norway, Canada, and the United States, were also reported to be in Kosovo.
- Albania responded to the crisis by mobilizing what the Albanian Prime Minister referred to as “the biggest number of troops on our northern border since World War II.” These troops were reinforced in the wake of Serbian troop incursions into Albanian territory. Serbian forces also fired mortars and artillery into towns in Albania. The Yugoslav and Albanian armies exchanged gunfire across the border and battled inside Albanian territory for the first time since the conflict began. Shelling of Albanian towns by Serbian forces increased after the June 3, 1999 peace agreement was announced.
- Up to several hundred Yugoslav troops crossed into the disputed territory of Prevlaka, a UN-controlled demilitarized zone in Croatia, where they remained for several days.
- NATO and Yugoslav military officers met on the Serbian-Macedonian border to discuss implementation of the peace plan and the mechanics of the Serbian withdrawal from Kosovo. Under the plan, Yugoslavia was required to withdraw its mobile air defense forces from Kosovo within 48 hours and all troops were to leave Kosovo within 7 days. However, during two days of discussions, Yugoslav military representatives refused to accept NATO’s timeline for troop withdrawal and other terms and the talks broke down. British Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson, the commander of NATO forces in the area, announced that NATO “has no alternative but to continue and intensify the air campaign” as a result. On June 9, 1999, Serbian military officials finally signed a detailed military technical agreement, granting them 11 days to fully withdraw from Kosovo. Secretary of Defense Cohen stated that the agreement “meets all of NATO’s demands.”
- Refugees return to Kosovo in increasing numbers, although the security situation remains unstable. Several refugees were been killed or injured by landmines as they returned to Kosovo. Some returning ethnic Albanians looted and burned homes formerly occupied by Serbs. Violent clashes between Serbs and ethnic Albanians also increased. Task Force FALCON commander Brigadier General John Craddock stated, “there’s no law here that governs.” The situation in the northern town of Kosovska Mitrovica was described as a “ticking time bomb.”

Political/Diplomatic Developments

- A last-ditch diplomatic effort to convince Yugoslav President Milosevic to sign on to the Rambouillet accord failed.

- NATO Secretary General Javier Solana provided a written guarantee to 5 non-NATO nations bordering Yugoslavia – Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Romania – pledging NATO support if they are attacked. Commenting on the situation of the seven “front-line” states, President Clinton stated, “If Mr. Milosevic threatens them for helping us, we will respond.”
- Russian President Yeltsin called the NATO air strikes “outright aggression.” Prime Minister Primakov, on his way to the United States, ordered his plane to return to Moscow after learning that NATO air strikes were imminent. Russia recalled its ambassador to NATO, expelled NATO diplomats from Russia, and froze NATO contacts. In addition, Russia suspended its participation in the Partnership for Peace program, provided “humanitarian” aid to Serbia, and threatened to reconsider its compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty. Although President Yeltsin declared that Russia will not be drawn into the conflict, Russia announced its intention to deploy up to 7 warships to the Adriatic Sea and sent two intelligence gathering ships to the region. Russia also canceled military cooperation with NATO countries and threatened to withdraw from the SFOR peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Yeltsin suggested the conflict could lead to “a world war.”
- Yugoslavia declared it would take all measures necessary to defend itself against any military attack. The Belgrade government declared a “state of war,” imposed martial law, expelled a number of Western journalists, and severed diplomatic relations with the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Albania. The Yugoslav parliament voted to join an alliance with Russia and Belarus – a move supported by the Russian Duma – and Belarussian President Lukashenko traveled to Belgrade in a show of solidarity. Yugoslavia also accused NATO of genocide and demanded that the International Court of Justice order a halt to the bombing. After Serbian forces withdrew from Kosovo and NATO terminated the air campaign, the Yugoslav parliament on June 24, 1999 formally declared an end to the state of war.
- China condemned NATO air strikes as a “dangerous precedent of naked aggression” and called the accidental bombing of its embassy in Belgrade a “barbarian act” and a “war crime.” In response to the attack, China suspended talks with the United States on arms control, proliferation, and human rights. Daily protests at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing after the embassy bombing trapped embassy staff inside the building. China also indicated it might veto a UN mandate for a peacekeeping force in Kosovo unless the NATO bombing stops first. As a result of China’s UN Security Council veto earlier in the year, the mandate for a UN preventive deployment force in Macedonia – including more than 300 American troops – expired.
- Protests in Macedonia over NATO air strikes turned violent. Gunfire and explosions occurred in the capital city of Skopje and the U.S. Embassy was attacked by an angry mob. President Clinton notified Congress of his intention to send 100 U.S. Marines to Skopje for embassy security.
- Russia launched a new diplomatic initiative by sending Prime Minister Primakov, Defense Minister Sergeyev, and other officials to Belgrade for talks with Milosevic. After the meeting, Milosovic conditioned a withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo on, among other things, a halt to the NATO bombing campaign and the lifting of economic sanctions. The United States called this “woefully inadequate.” Russian President Yeltsin also proposed the convening of an emergency meeting of the industrialized nations to deal with the situation and warned NATO against introducing ground troops in Kosovo. A statement by Russia’s parliament speaker that Russia targeted NATO countries with strategic missiles was denied by the head of Russia’s Strategic Missile Forces. Russia also sought to bolster its tactical nuclear forces.
- Pope John Paul II urged a pause in the bombing campaign over the Easter holiday and the establishment by Yugoslavia of a “humanitarian corridor” to bring relief supplies to refugees on the border. An envoy from the Vatican met with Milosevic in Belgrade to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

- Kosovar Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova was shown on Serbian television meeting with Milosevic in Belgrade. He reportedly signed a document calling for a peaceful end to the conflict through “political means.” Contacts close to Rugova stated that Rugova’s house was occupied by Serbian police and that he could not leave the country. Rugova was also shown meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Yugoslavia and Serbian President Milutinovic. In a broadcast on Serbian state television, Rugova announced that he and Serbian President Milutinovic had agreed to form a new, temporary government for Kosovo. On May 5, 1999, Rugova and his family were allowed to travel to Italy. At a press conference, he called for an international peacekeeping force in Kosovo, “including the forces of NATO and other countries.” Rugova also traveled to Germany and Belgium, where he visited NATO headquarters. He also visited a refugee camp in Macedonia.
- KLA political leader Hashim Thaqi announced the formation of a Kosovo “government” with himself as its head and excluding Rugova’s followers. He said Rugova “represents the very narrow interests of a small group of people around him” and called for the “liberation” of Kosovo through independence.
- The U.S. State Department identified 9 Yugoslav military officers by name, putting them “on notice” that they may be prosecuted for war crimes. Indicted Bosnian Serb war criminal Ratko Mladic was reported to be commanding paramilitary groups in Kosovo and the paramilitary leader “Arkan” was said to be recruiting fighters for Kosovo from Serbian prisons. After the NATO military campaign against Yugoslavia was terminated, the United States offered up to a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any indicted war criminal, including Milosevic.
- NATO Foreign Ministers, meeting in Brussels on April 12, 1999, reaffirmed support for the continuing military action against Yugoslavia. The possibility of a Russian role in any diplomatic outcome to the crisis was also discussed. Secretary of State Albright stated that it is in the interests of both the United States and Russia that “Russia be part of the solution.”
- The United States rejected a plan by Germany that would condition a halt to the bombing on the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and make the province a United Nations protectorate. Russia would be involved in guaranteeing Kosovo’s security. The European Union proposed to supervise the administration of Kosovo. Milosevic indicated he might be willing to accept the presence of unarmed UN observers from non-NATO countries to monitor a peace accord. President Clinton telephoned President Yeltsin to encourage Russia’s participation in a peacekeeping force.
- A peace initiative by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was rejected by Yugoslavia. Annan traveled to Moscow to discuss the situation with Yeltsin. Annan also appointed two special envoys to help seek a resolution to the crisis. Although he called the bombing necessary, Annan criticized UN member states for taking military action against Yugoslavia without receiving prior authority from the UN Security Council.
- After meeting with Russian envoy Victor Chernomyrdin, Milosevic indicated his willingness to consider an international civilian peacekeeping force for Kosovo, with Russian participation, under UN authority. NATO rejected a 6-point Yugoslav proposal, brokered by Chernomyrdin, that called for a cease-fire, autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia, a simultaneous pullback of NATO forces from Yugoslavia’s borders and most Serbian forces from Kosovo, and the presence of lightly armed peacekeepers. Milosevic, in an interview, stated he would accept a non-NATO UN peacekeeping force with “self-defense weapons... but no offensive weapons.” President Clinton stated that the composition of the peacekeeping force could be “subject to negotiation.” Chernomyrdin also met with President Clinton in Washington to discuss the Russian-Yugoslav peace plan and with Chinese officials after the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. On May 12, 1999, Russia threatened to halt its diplomatic peace efforts if its proposals were not considered seriously by NATO.

- The European Union (EU) agreed to impose additional economic sanctions on Yugoslavia and appointed Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as its special Kosovo envoy. The United States also imposed a trade embargo on Yugoslavia.
- Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister Vuk Draskovic stated that Yugoslavia would accept armed peacekeepers, even from NATO countries, if the UN demands it. He called on Yugoslav leaders to “stop lying to the people in Serbia and finally tell them the truth” that “NATO is not facing a breakdown, that Russia will not help Yugoslavia militarily, and that world public opinion is against us.” He also said that Yugoslavia “cannot defeat NATO,” which “has never been stronger and more homogeneous.” Subsequent to making these remarks, Draskovic was fired.
- On May 6, 1999, the “Group of Eight” – the seven major industrialized countries plus Russia – agreed in Germany on a 7-point plan that would provide for a withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and the deployment of “effective international civil and security presences.” This was seen as opening the door to deployment of a military peacekeeping force involving troops from Russia, Ukraine, and other countries. Under the plan, an international administration of Kosovo would be established on an “interim” basis and UN authorization for the peacekeeping force would be sought. The KLA criticized aspects of the agreement, calling continued Yugoslav sovereignty over Kosovo and disarmament of the KLA “unacceptable.” Milosevic indicated his acceptance in principle of the plan. On June 8, 1999, the Group of Eight agreed to a draft UN resolution providing for an international military security force in Kosovo.
- On May 27, 1999, the International War Crimes Tribunal indicted Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and four other Yugoslav officials for war crimes. Russia called the indictment “counterproductive” to the peace process.
- After meeting with U.S. and NATO representatives, Finnish President and EU representative Ahtisaari traveled to Belgrade with Russian envoy Chernomyrdin to present a detailed NATO peace plan to Milosevic that included a timetable for troop withdrawals and a method for verifying compliance. U.S. and NATO officials declared that the plan, which was accepted by Yugoslavia on June 3, 1999, met NATO’s five conditions for a halt to the military campaign. It provided for a NATO and Russian role in the peacekeeping operation, which would be authorized by the UN Security Council.
- On June 10, 1999, the UN Security Council approved a resolution providing for the deployment of an international military peacekeeping force in Kosovo and the establishment of an interim civil administration to oversee the creation of a police force and independent judiciary and the return of refugees.

Congressional Actions

- On March 11, 1999, the House voted 219-191 in favor of a non-binding resolution of support for the deployment of U.S. ground troops into Kosovo as part of a NATO peacekeeping mission. A resolution to disapprove the deployment was defeated by a vote of 237-178.
- On March 23, 1999, the Senate voted 58-41 to authorize the President to conduct air strikes against Yugoslavia as part of a NATO operation in response to Serbia’s continued aggression against the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo.
- On March 24, 1999, the House voted 424-1 in favor of a resolution of support for the U.S. armed forces involved in military operations against Yugoslavia. An identical resolution was approved by the Senate the same day.

- Senators McConnell and Lieberman introduced legislation authorizing \$25 million for an “arm and train” program for the Kosovar Albanians. In the House, Rep. Sanford announced his intention to sponsor similar legislation. Senator Helms also introduced the “Serbia Democratization Act,” which would provide \$100 million to overthrow Milosevic and support a democratic opposition in Serbia.
- On April 28, 1999, the House voted 427-2 against a resolution sponsored by Rep. Campbell to declare a state of war with Yugoslavia. Another Campbell resolution requiring the withdrawal of U.S. forces was defeated by a vote of 290-139. On a tie vote of 213-213, the House disapproved a resolution of support for the air strikes. A resolution co-sponsored by Reps. Fowler and Goodling prohibiting funding for the deployment of U.S. ground troops without prior Congressional approval passed by a vote of 249-180.
- Nine Congressmen and Senators sent a letter to President Clinton stating it would be “prudent for the United States to urge NATO to plan for additional military missions, including the use of ground forces.” The letter stated that the military effort “could require many more weeks or months to succeed.”
- Twenty one members of the House and Senate traveled to Albania and Macedonia to review the international refugee relief effort. Rep. Saxton traveled to Belgrade in an attempt to win the release of the three U.S. servicemen captured by Serbian forces.
- On May 2, 1999, an 11-member House delegation meeting with Russian Duma members in Vienna signed a joint statement calling for a halt to NATO bombing, the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo, an end to military activities conducted by the KLA, the release of all prisoners of war, and the return of refugees under the auspices of a UN peacekeeping force.
- On May 4, 1999, the Senate voted 78-22 to set aside a resolution introduced by Senator McCain that would grant the President the authority “to use all necessary force and other means,” including ground troops.
- On May 6, 1999, by a vote of 311-105, the House approved an emergency supplemental spending bill of nearly \$13 billion – more than double the amount requested by President Clinton – to cover the costs of the Kosovo operation and to fund additional military-related expenses. An amendment to prohibit spending on ground troops without prior Congressional approval failed 301-117. The Senate approved a similar emergency supplemental spending bill. On May 18, 1999, a compromise emergency spending bill was approved by the House on a vote of 269-158. Two days later, the Senate approved the measure 64-36. The President signed the bill into law on May 21, 1999.
- On May 25, 1999, 26 members of Congress filed a lawsuit to halt the bombing campaign, charging that the 60-day deadline contained in the War Powers Act for keeping U.S. forces involved in hostilities without Congressional authorization had expired. The suit was dismissed by a federal judge on June 8, 1999.
- More than 80 members of Congress, including 30 Democrats, sent a letter to President Clinton calling for a 3-day pause in the bombing campaign.
- On June 10, 1999, the House voted 270-155 to remove a restriction in the fiscal year 2000 defense authorization bill that would limit funding for U.S. participation in the military and peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. The vote came after the House received a letter from President Clinton pledging not to use defense funds authorized for other purposes for the Kosovo operation and to submit a supplemental budget request for the costs of the peacekeeping operation.

The Rambouillet Negotiations

- The Balkan “contact group” – consisting of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and Russia – issued an ultimatum to Serbia and the Kosovar Albanians to negotiate an end to the fighting and an interim autonomy solution for Kosovo by February 19, 1999 or face the prospect of NATO military action.
- Elements of a political solution discussed at Rambouillet, France included new elections, establishment of self-government for Kosovo and greater independence from Serbia, and a reduction in the level of Serbian army units stationed in the province. Yugoslavia would control foreign policy, military, and economic matters, while Kosovo authorities would be responsible for internal security and the police force. The KLA would also be disarmed. After three years, an international meeting would be convened to determine a final settlement.
- A final agreement at Rambouillet was not reached, even though the deadline was extended several days. The Kosovar side insisted it needed several more weeks to sell the interim agreement to the various ethnic Albanian factions.
- The parties resumed negotiations in Paris on March 15, 1999. Four days later, representatives of the Kosovar Albanian side signed the Rambouillet accord. However, Serbia continued to demand significant changes in the agreement and to reject the stationing of NATO troops on its soil. Negotiations were indefinitely suspended.

The Peacekeeping Force

The Rambouillet KFOR

- In the context of the Rambouillet talks, NATO developed plans to deploy some 28,000 NATO ground troops in Kosovo as peacekeepers (KFOR) to monitor compliance with any negotiated agreement.
- The United States agreed in principle to participate for at least 3 years in any Kosovo peacekeeping operation with approximately 4,000 U.S. ground troops.
 - U.S. officials placed two preconditions on any U.S. participation: first, that both sides want the United States to take part; and second, that there be no hostilities. Secretary of Defense Cohen stated: “I would not favor, under any circumstances... putting American troops into Kosovo in an intrusive or non-permissive environment.”
 - Secretary Cohen also stated, “If you’re talking about a 4,000-man force, you’re really talking about 12,000. You need three forces: one coming out, one replacing them, and one training to go.”
- A NATO option under consideration at the time – “Option A-minus” – would have divided Kosovo into four sectors, each controlled by a different country, including the United States. Each sector would have consisted of about 6,000 troops.
- Press reports indicated that U.S. officials were receptive to placing any U.S. troops that would participate in a Kosovo peacekeeping operation under the tactical command of a British officer. Secretary Cohen stated that although he would “prefer to have an American in charge,” this is “still a question that has to be resolved.” General Clark, as SACEUR, would maintain overall control of the operation.

- The costs of this deployment were estimated by DOD to be as much as \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion annually.

The Post-Bombing KFOR

- After more than two months of aerial bombing and intensive diplomatic efforts to find an acceptable negotiated outcome to the Kosovo crisis, NATO developed plans to provide for a peacekeeping force of up to 50,000 troops – nearly twice the level envisioned under the Rambouillet agreement. The more robust KFOR would also provide security for the hundreds of thousands of returning refugees. British Defense Minister George Robertson indicated that these troops might “escort” refugees back into Kosovo. According to DOD spokesman Ken Bacon, the KFOR would initially deploy to Macedonia “as quickly as possible.”
- On May 25, 1999, NATO approved plans to deploy a 50,000-strong KFOR (OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN), which was expected to be in place by the end of June. Some 30,000 troops would be positioned on the Macedonian border and would not enter Kosovo until Serbian forces are withdrawn. Additional peacekeeping troops would be pre-deployed in Albania and Bulgaria. There was also discussion among NATO officials regarding the possible use of the peacekeeping force in a combat role. Britain ordered 12,000 more troops to prepare for deployment as part of the enhanced KFOR.
- On June 2, 1999, President Clinton announced that the United States would contribute up to 7,000 U.S. ground forces to any international peacekeeping force in Kosovo. The following day, Yugoslavia accepted a proposal to create a peacekeeping force authorized by the United Nations and that would include both NATO and Russian troops under a command structure similar to the peacekeeping force in Bosnia. More than 30 countries reportedly offered to contribute peacekeeping forces. Some 2,200 U.S. Marines joined the vanguard of the 16,000-strong “enabling force” based in Macedonia. U.S. forces began arriving in Greece after that country temporarily refused the U.S. forces transit through the country.
- Russia indicated its willingness to provide up to 10,000 troops. However, Russia also indicated that its peacekeeping contingent would not operate under NATO command. Approximately 200 Russian troops crossed into Yugoslavia from Bosnia and deployed to Pristina, the provincial capital of Kosovo, in advance of NATO forces, establishing a base at the airport and denying NATO access to much of the airport. Russian officials described their unannounced deployment there as a “mistake” and said they would be ordered to leave “immediately.” However, President Yeltsin reportedly authorized the deployment and promoted the commander of the detachment. Russian and Western press reports indicated this move was part of a larger plan intended to deceive NATO and occupy a larger portion of Kosovo. As a result of the deployment, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria refused to grant Russia overflight rights for additional troop deployments. A small contingent of additional Russian troops carrying supplies arrived at the airport after traveling overland from Bosnia. A KLA spokesman said Russian peacekeepers not operating under NATO command would be “unwelcome” and “we will treat them as an enemy force.” On June 18, 1999, the United States and Russia signed an agreement calling for 2,850 Russian troops to deploy within the U.S., French, and German sectors. An additional 750 Russian troops are to provide ground security at Pristina airport, in the British sector, while NATO forces will control air traffic at the airport. Additional Russian and NATO troops flew into Pristina airport, which was partially reopened on June 26, 1999.
- On June 9, 1999, the North Atlantic Council approved the operation plan and activation order for KFOR pre-deployment activities. The U.S. KFOR contingent (Task Force FALCON) will include some forces that will re-deploy to Macedonia from Albania, including Apache helicopters, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, and M1-A1 Abrams tanks. U.S. forces in Germany also began preparations to deploy to Kosovo.

- For peacekeeping purposes, Kosovo was divided into five sectors, to be overseen by forces from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. The U.S. sector is headquartered in the town of Urosevac. Serbian troops are required to withdraw 15 miles from the Kosovo border, creating a buffer zone inside Serbian territory, which KFOR will patrol. The overall withdrawal of Serbian forces occurred in stages, with separate deadlines for vacating three “zones” within Kosovo.
- The phased withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo proceeded relatively smoothly and NATO judged Yugoslavia to be in general compliance with the military technical agreement. However, NATO granted Serbian forces additional time to complete their withdrawal from Zone I because of delays caused by traffic congestion along designated outbound routes. On June 20, 1999, Serbian forces completed their withdrawal from Kosovo according to the agreement’s timetable.
- The UN Security Council resolution authorizing deployment of the peacekeeping force outlined the duties of the KFOR as enforcing a cease-fire; ensuring the Serbian troop withdrawal and preventing the return of those forces; securing the return of refugees; removing mines; and patrolling the borders. NATO has also given KFOR authority to apprehend war criminals. In the absence of an effective civilian police presence, KFOR has also been conducting police work in an effort to restore public order. General Clark stated that “good soldiers... cannot fully perform police duties among local populations,” no matter how well they are trained and equipped. A rise in crime led German KFOR troops to impose a curfew in Prizren.
- Cease-fire violations occurred with departing Serbian forces torching villages and manning roadblocks. Several Serbs were also killed by ethnic Albanian partisans. Several fatalities resulted from confrontations between NATO peacekeepers and Serbian forces and civilians after the initial NATO force deployment. NATO spokesman Jamie Shea stated that “there have been a large number of very regrettable incidents.” Two British peacekeepers and two civilians were also killed by a NATO cluster bomb that detonated as they were clearing munitions. U.S. Marines also were shot at by snipers and returned fire, killing one assailant. A subsequent attack on a group of U.S. Marines led to the death of another attacker. Other KFOR forces have also encountered sniper fire. General Clark called on NATO to “accelerate” the deployment of forces into Kosovo and suggested that the total size of the KFOR might need to increase.
- On June 20, 1999, KLA political leader Hashim Thaqi and KFOR commander General Jackson signed a military technical agreement providing for the demilitarization the KLA within 30 days. KLA forces agreed to turn in their heavy weapons, to disband, and to “refrain from all hostile or provocative acts.” The agreement also raises the possibility that the KLA could form a provisional army modeled on the U.S. National Guard. U.S. troops disarmed more than 100 KLA members and detained six after a confrontation in the U.S. sector. KFOR has also continued to disarm KLA forces elsewhere in the province.
- A report by a non-governmental research group estimated the cost of U.S. participation in the peacekeeping force at between \$2 billion and \$3.5 billion annually. Secretary of Defense Cohen stated that the costs could reach \$2 billion a year.
- NATO Secretary General Solana stated that the peacekeeping mission would probably last “more than three years.” U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Erik Shinseki suggested that U.S. forces would likely be in Kosovo for “at least four years.” UN Balkans envoy Carl Bildt stated, “This is to be... the most complex peace implementation operation ever undertaken by the international community in modern times.”

Future Prospects

- There are some signs that Milosevic's political position has been weakened. A key nationalist faction quit the government in protest after NATO forces entered Kosovo and the Serbian Orthodox Church has called for political change. Milosevic assumed a hard line in order not to jeopardize his ability to exploit Serb nationalism to preserve his own power. However, his acceptance of a NATO-backed peace deal after more than 70 days of bombing may result in a growing chorus of opposition voices arguing that he was "too soft" on Kosovo. Although his agreement to the peace proposal was seen as a positive development by NATO, there was concern that it came after he achieved his objectives in Kosovo. Moreover, his prospective compliance with the agreement remains questionable.
- The humanitarian crisis, described by a NATO spokesman as the most serious in Europe since the end of World War II, is likely to remain a major challenge for the international community over the near term. In addition, the economic rebuilding of Kosovo and the Balkans is likely to be a costly and prolonged task – perhaps requiring as much as \$30 billion over the next six to eight years.
- The Serbian military, although suffering significant damage as a result of repeated NATO air strikes, did not show any indication that its resolve was weakening, although official NATO opinions were mixed regarding morale. Yugoslav air defenses were degraded but not eliminated and could still pose a significant threat to NATO aircraft if implementation of the peace agreement falters and military action resumes. The downing of a U.S. "Stealth" fighter near Belgrade, the seizure of 3 U.S. soldiers deployed in Macedonia, and a number of civilian casualties resulting from allied strikes provided an important propaganda windfall.
- Anti-U.S. and anti-NATO protests increased around the world as the military campaign continued. Now that NATO peacekeepers have arrived on the scene, the prospects for violence directed against them are significant. Already NATO forces have faced violent attacks by Serbs within Kosovo. American forces are likely to be subjected to increased attacks as the NATO occupation of Kosovo continues.
- The role of air power alone in ending the violence being carried out by Serbian military and police forces in Kosovo will likely be debated for some time to come. NATO officials have long insisted that air power alone would be sufficient to accomplish NATO's objectives, if given enough time to work. On April 2, 1999, President Clinton declared, "I still believe that we have a good possibility of achieving our mission with the means we have deployed." However, on May 18, 1999, he said that no option has been taken "off the table." As Serb forces continued to ethnically "cleanse" Kosovo, concern mounted that NATO was in a race for time to stop the atrocities. Milosevic threatened "a spreading of fire across the Balkans... if the foot of an American, German, or English occupier steps on our Slavic land." Yugoslavia's commanding general in Kosovo stated that Serbia is "preparing for an all-out war" and that "no foreign soldiers will come to this territory without large losses."
- The KLA is believed to have been effectively dismembered as a unified force, although it has gained recruits and regrouped in Albania. Individual KLA fighters continued to strike out at Serb forces within Kosovo and are credited with flushing out those forces and making them vulnerable to NATO air strikes. The ethnic Albanian population is likely to be increasingly radicalized and supportive of independence for Kosovo. Moreover, the KLA's support for the peace agreement is questionable. KLA leader Hashim Thaqi rejected "categorically" the idea of separate peacekeeping forces in Kosovo that could lead to a de facto partition of the province. Although the peace agreement calls for the "demilitarization" of the KLA, there is uncertainty over whether the KLA will agree to be completely disarmed. KLA forces have established checkpoints within Kosovo and have taken over various buildings, raising concerns over NATO's ability to keep KLA

forces from engaging in violent reprisals against remaining Serbs. The role of the KLA as a political force in Kosovo is also expected to increase.

- The specific details regarding the civil administration of Kosovo under the protection of an international peacekeeping force remain to be decided. NATO agreed to allow some Serbian forces, numbering in the “hundreds,” to return to Kosovo after a full withdrawal in order to clear mines, provide border security, and protect specific sites of religious and historical significance to Serbia. In addition, Russia’s actions have been seen as erratic and Russia’s role in the peacekeeping force has yet to be determined. The length of time a peacekeeping force will be required is also uncertain. President Clinton stated that some kind of “international force” will be required “for some period of time” to provide for the security of refugees returning to Kosovo. NATO officials have reiterated this view. In addition, whether the ethnic Albanian refugees will view the peacekeeping force as providing a sufficient level of security for them to return to Kosovo remains to be seen.
- The U.S. and NATO ability to influence events in Kosovo will be at odds with both Serb and Kosovar nationalism. A return to autonomy, as proposed by Western governments, is unlikely to satisfy the demands of either side. The uncertain duration of a peacekeeping force and the tentative nature of any political settlement may also increase frustrations on both sides that could lead to violence.
- The peace agreement accepted by Yugoslavia has allowed Russia to move from the diplomatic sidelines to center stage, increasing its stature and influence. Russia’s role in the peacekeeping force will also influence the ultimate ability of the force to accomplish its objectives. Involvement of the UN Security Council in a political solution will also increase China’s role.

Background

- Kosovo, a southern province of Serbia that borders Albania, had a pre-war population that was 90 percent ethnic Albanian and 10 percent Serb. Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo are called “Kosovars.”
- Although ethnically closer to Albania, Kosovo holds a special significance for Serbs - Warren Zimmerman, a Balkans expert who was the Bush Administration’s final ambassador to the former Yugoslavia, describes Kosovo as the “Serb Jerusalem.” While Serb claims to Kosovo have an unclear basis in history, the battle of Kosovo in 1389 is central to the mythology of Serb nationalism.
- With the breakup of the former Yugoslavia ruled by Tito, President Milosevic has sought to exploit Serb nationalism to maintain his hold on power and exercise tighter control over the province. In 1989, Yugoslav President Milosevic rescinded the autonomy that Kosovo was granted under a 1974 constitution. This action sparked a growing resistance movement among Kosovars.
- An October 1998 cease-fire agreement calling on Serbia to withdraw military and police forces used to repress the Kosovars was repeatedly violated by both sides. Prior to the NATO attack, Serbian troops built up their manpower and equipment deployments along Kosovo’s border with Serbia. Some 40,000 Serbian troops and 300 tanks were deployed in and around Kosovo, in violation of the October 1998 cease-fire agreement. Numerous villages in Kosovo have been burned by Serbian troops. DOD officials had threatened Serbia with air strikes if they violated the October 1998 agreement to reduce their presence in Kosovo.
- Some 1,400 unarmed international inspectors in Kosovo to monitor the cease fire were withdrawn in anticipation of NATO air strikes. Their freedom of movement – guaranteed by the October 1998 cease-fire – had been restricted by Serbian forces.

A Regional Chronology

- 1389** On June 28th the Serbian army lead by King Lazaar was defeated by the Ottomans at Kosovo Polje (The Field of Blackbirds).
- 1914** A Serbian ultranationalist assassinates Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, Bosnia, igniting World War I.
- 1974** Yugoslav constitution is rewritten, declaring Kosovo as an autonomous province within Serbia.
- 1980** Yugoslav leader Tito dies on May 4th.
- 1989** Slobodan Milosevic is named president of Serbia. The constitutional autonomy of Kosovo is revoked and Kosovo Albanians riot.
- 1996** The Kosovo Liberation Army is formed.
- 1998** January 4th — The KLA announces the official beginning of its war of independence from Serbia.
- February 28 — Serbian military forces move into Kosovo and begin attacking villages in response to KLA attacks against Serbian police.
- March 31 – After repeated attempts at international mediation by the Contact Group (United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Germany and Russia), the UN Security Council passed a resolution , imposing an arms embargo on Serbia.
- May 15 — The KLA seizes control of 40 percent of Kosovo before a Serbian offensive reverses the gain.
- September — Serb forces continue to attack Kosovo; massacred Albanians discovered. U.N. Security Council adopts resolution calling for immediate cease-fire and political dialogue between sides.
- October — The United States commits forces to participate in possible NATO air raids against Serb forces in Kosovo. Belgrade agrees to international monitoring by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- 1999** January 15 — 45 ethnic Albanians slain outside Racak; intensified international mediation efforts follow.
- February 6-17 — First inconclusive round of talks between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs in Rambouillet, France.

- 1999 Cont.** February-March — Both sides launch attacks. Milosevic places approximately 40,000 Serbian troops with 300 tanks on the Kosovo border.
- March 11— The House votes 219-191 in favor of a non-binding resolution of support for the deployment of U.S. ground troops into Kosovo as part of a NATO peacekeeping mission.
- March 18 — Kosovo Albanians sign peace deal calling for a 3 year period of autonomy and NATO peacekeeping troops to implement it. The Serbs refuse.
- March 20 — International peace monitors evacuate Kosovo.
- March 23 — U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke fails to persuade Milosevic that airstrikes will begin unless he agrees to international presence. The Senate voted 58-41 to authorize the President to conduct air strikes against Yugoslavia.
- March 24 – Phase I of NATO’s bombing campaign “Operation Allied Force” begins. The House votes 424-1 in favor of a resolution of support for the U.S. armed forces involved in military operations against Yugoslavia.
- March 28 – The U.S. rescues a downed pilot of an F-117 stealth fighter that went down over Yugoslavia.
- March 31 – Three U.S. soldiers participating in the UN peacekeeping force in Macedonia were captured by Serbian forces near the Yugoslav border.
- April 4 – The NATO countries announce that they will airlift up to 100,000 ethnic Albanian refugees out of the region and offer them temporary shelter abroad.
- April 12 – A missile launched from a NATO aircraft against a bridge in Yugoslavia also strikes a passenger train crossing the bridge at the moment of impact.
- April 14 – A NATO aircraft mistakenly drops a bomb on a civilian vehicle in a convoy in Kosovo.
- April 23-25 – NATO holds a summit in Washington, DC to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Ongoing operations in Kosovo are the main topic of discussion.
- April 26- An Apache crashes on a training mission north of Tirana, the capitol of Albania.
- April 28- The House votes 427-2 against a resolution sponsored by Rep. Campbell to declare a state of war with Yugoslavia. Another Campbell resolution requiring the withdrawal of U.S. forces is defeated by a vote of 290-139. The House disapproves a resolution of support for the air strikes by a vote of 213-213. A resolution prohibiting funding for the deployment of U.S. ground troops without prior Congressional approval passes by a vote of 249-180.

1999 Cont. April 29- A missile launched at a Yugoslav surface-to-air missile site veers off course and lands outside Sofia, Bulgaria.

May 1- A NATO missile hits a passenger bus crossing a bridge in Kosovo.

May 2- Yugoslavia releases the three U.S. soldiers held captive since March 31 to Reverend Jesse Jackson.

May 4- The Senate votes 78-22 to set aside a resolution introduced by Senator McCain that would grant the President the authority “to use all necessary force and other means,” including ground troops.

May 5- A second Apache crashes killing two U.S. crewmen on board.

May 6- The House approves by a vote of 311-105, an emergency supplemental spending bill of nearly \$13 billion to cover the costs of the Kosovo operation and to fund additional military-related expenses.

May 7 - NATO accidentally bombs the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

May 13 - Yugoslavia says 87 ethnic Albanians are killed in a Kosovo village bombed by NATO, NATO says it struck a Serb military command post and that civilians were used as human shields.

May 20 - NATO airstrikes damage several embassies and diplomatic residences in Belgrade.

May 21 - NATO mistakenly attacks a barracks in Kosovo controlled by the KLA

June 2 - The “Group of Eight” agrees to a Kosovo peace plan that provides for a Serbian troop withdrawal from Kosovo and an international military peacekeeping presence. President Clinton announces the U.S. will contribute up to 7,000 troops to the peacekeeping force.

June 3 - Yugoslavia officially accepts the peace plan after the Serbian parliament votes to approve it.

June 9 - A military technical agreement detailing the modalities and procedures for a Serbian troop withdrawal from Kosovo is signed by NATO and Yugoslav military officials.

June 10 - Serbian troops begin their withdrawal from Kosovo and NATO suspends its air campaign against Yugoslavia.

June 12 - NATO peacekeeping forces enter Kosovo.

June 20 - Serbian forces complete their withdrawal from Kosovo.